

University of Groningen

## Moses and His Parents

Ruiten, J.T.A.G.M. van

*Published in:*  
EPRINTS-BOOK-TITLE

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

*Document Version*  
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

*Publication date:*  
2006

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*

Ruiten, J. T. A. G. M. V. (2006). Moses and His Parents: The Intertextual Relationship between Exodus 1. In *EPRINTS-BOOK-TITLE* s.n..

### Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

The publication may also be distributed here under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license. More information can be found on the University of Groningen website: <https://www.rug.nl/library/open-access/self-archiving-pure/taverne-amendment>.

### Take-down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

*Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.*

# Moses and His Parents: The Intertextual Relationship between Exodus 1:22-2:10 and *Jubilees* 47:1-9

J. T. A. G. M. van Ruiten

## 1. Introduction

The book of *Jubilees* consists of a rewriting of the biblical narrative of the book of Genesis: the primeval history and the history of the patriarchs, with a special emphasis on Jacob. For this reason, one of the traditional names of the book is *The Little Genesis*.<sup>1</sup> Despite its emphasis on Genesis, however, the book of *Jubilees* also deals with the book of Exodus. One can point to the beginning of chapter 1, where the author combines Exodus 19:1 (the arrival of the people of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai) and Exodus 24:18-21 (the ascension by Moses of the mountain to receive the tablets of stone) to describe the scene for the revelation.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the narrative of Exodus 1-14 is represented at the end, in *Jubilees* 46:1-48:19. It is a very condensed rendering, however. Some passages are omitted and other

---

<sup>1</sup>This name occurs in four different forms Η Λεπτὴ Γένεσις (e.g., Epiphanius); Η Λεπτογένεσις (e.g., Didymus of Alexandria); τὰ Λεπτὰ Γένεσεω (Syncellus); Η Μικρογένεσις (Jerome). All forms probably reflect an original Hebrew form: בְּרֵאשִׁית זוֹטָא. Cf. H. Rönsch, *Das Buch der Jubiläen: oder die Kleine Genesis; unter Beifügung des revidirten Textes der in der Ambrosiana aufgefundenen lateinischen Fragmente* (Leipzig 1874; repr. Amsterdam 1970) 461-468; R. H. Charles, *The Book of Jubilees or the Little Genesis: Translated from the Editor's Ethiopic Text* (London: Black 1902) xvi-xvi.

<sup>2</sup>Exodus 19 and 24 are parallel versions of the episode of on Mount Sinai, which supplement each other in many ways. *Jub.* 1:1-4 may be an example of a text, which that reflects a version in which elements of both chapters have been combined. According to E. Tov, "4Q364. 4QReworked Pentateuch<sup>b</sup>," in: H. W. Attridge et al. (eds.), *Qumran Cave 4 – VIII: Parabiblical Texts. Part 1* (DJD 13; Oxford: Clarendon 1994) 221-222, the text of 4Q364 (Frg. 14) also shows a combination of elements of both chapters (i.e., Exod 19:17 and Exod 24:12-14).

passages are significantly abbreviated, for example the story of the plagues (Exodus 7-12), which the author deals with in just four verses (*Jub.* 48:5-8). The passage immediately preceding the story of the plagues (Exod 2:23-7:9), and following the period of Moses in Midian, is also dealt with very briefly (*Jub.* 48:1-4). The theophany at the burning bush, the commission of Moses, and the revelation of the Name is dealt with in just one phrase ("You know who spoke to you at Mt Sinai"). Although the rewriting in this part of the book is very concise, the author nevertheless takes the opportunity to present his world view. The narratives about Moses in Exodus 3-14 are in fact being rewritten in *Jubilees* as a battle between Mastema and the Angel of God. The world is under the control of the creator God, all-powerful and good, yet He permits the forces of evil to have some influence on mankind. Mastema is the leader of this host of evil powers. The Egyptian magicians are on the side of Mastema, whereas Moses is on the side of the Angel of God.

As far as the first two chapters of the book of Exodus are concerned, a few passages are omitted altogether (Exod 1:1-5, 13-21; 2:16-22), whereas the text of Exod 1:6-8 is quoted as the basis for an extensive addition in the book of *Jubilees* (*Jub.* 46:1-11), which serves as a transition between the Jacob episode and that of Moses. It explains why the prosperous situation for Israel in Egypt changed into a situation of slavery. Material with regard to Israel's prosperity is rearranged to the period before Joseph's death (*Jub.* 46:1-2). At the same time, the importance of Joseph's death is stressed by taking the references to his death in Genesis and Exodus together while reworking them into a new story, integrating it with non-scriptural material (*Jub.* 46:3-11). This reworking was motivated by problems in the biblical text, such as the fact that Joseph is not buried in Canaan immediately after his death, the unmotivated mention of a new king and a war, the unexplained change in the attitude of the Egyptians with regard to the children of Israel, and finally the somewhat odd formulation of a journey by Moses' father before Moses' birth. The effect of the rearrangement is in the first place a smooth transition from Genesis to Exodus. There is no break between the two biblical books. In the second place, there is a highly

organised sequence of events, from Israel's prosperity to Joseph's death and the rise of a new king, and Israel's enslavement.<sup>3</sup>

The only passages to be followed quite extensively are Exod 1:9-12 (cf. *Jub.* 46:12-16), which describes the situation of distress for the children of Israel, Exod 2:1-10 (cf. *Jub.* 47:1-9), which describes the birth of Moses, and Exod 2:11-15 (cf. *Jub.* 47:10-12), which describes the first period of his life until his flight to Midian. In the context of this contribution, I shall restrict myself to *Jub.* 47:1-9, which can be considered the rewriting of Exod 2:1-10, the story of Moses' birth.

## 2. Exodus 1:22-2:10

In contemporary exegetical literature, most exegetes assume that Exod 2:1-10 is a literary unit,<sup>4</sup> but a few consider Exod 1:22-2:10,<sup>5</sup> 1:15-2:10,<sup>6</sup> or 1:8-2:10<sup>7</sup> as a unit. Exod 2:11-15 is regarded as part of a larger entity, e.g., Exod 2:11-22 or Exod 2:11-25, whereas Exod 1:22 belongs to Exod 1:(8)15-22. I agree with the majority, and

---

<sup>3</sup>See J. T. A. G. M. van Ruiten, "Between Jacob's Death and Moses' Birth: The Intertextual Relationship between Genesis 50:15-Exodus 1:14 and *Jubilees* 46:1-16," in: A. Hilhorst, E. Puech, and E.J.C. Tigchelaar (eds.), *Flores Florentino: Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honour of Florentino García Martínez* (JSJSup; Leiden: Brill 2007) 467-489.

<sup>4</sup>E.g., C. Houtman, *Exodus, I* (COT; Kampen: Kok 1986) 254-277; J. I. Durham, *Exodus* (WBC 3; Waco, Tex.: Word Books 1987) 13-17; W. H. Schmidt, *Exodus I: Exodus 1-6* (BKAT 2.1; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag 1988) 49-64. According to some, Exod 2:1-10 is part of larger unity, either Exod 2:1-22 (e.g., G. Beer, *Exodus mit einem Beitrag von K. Galling* [HAT; Tübingen: Mohr 1939], Exod 2:1-15 (e.g., F. Michaeli, *Le livre de l'Exode* [CAT; Neuchâtel: Delachaux et Niestlé 1974), or even Exod 1:1-2:25 (J. Siebert-Hommes, *Let the Daughters Live! The Literary Architecture of Exodus 1-2 as a Key for Interpretation* [Biblical Interpretation Series 37; Leiden: Brill 1998]).

<sup>5</sup>So P. Weimar, "Exodus 1,1-2,10 als Eröffnungskomposition des Exodusbuches," in: M. Vervenne (ed.), *Studies in the Book of Exodus* (BETL 126; Leuven: Peters 1996) 179-208 (esp. 188-197); W.H.C. Propp, *Exodus 1-18* (AB 2; New York: Doubleday 1998) 142-160.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. I. Willi-Plein, "Ort und literarische Funktion der Geburtsgeschichte des Mose," VT 41 (1991) 110-118.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. B. S. Childs, *Exodus* (London: SCM Press 1977<sup>2</sup>) 7.

consider Exod 2:1-10 as a unit, although I think that it is only possible to understand this passage in close connection with Exod 1:15-22.<sup>8</sup> The command of Pharaoh to kill every Hebrew male child (Exod 1:15-22) forms the background to the story of the birth of Moses (Exod 2:1-10).<sup>9</sup>

Exodus 2:1-10 can be considered as a kind of marriage and birth report, which strengthens the unity of the passage. The basic structure is as follows: 1. A man knew<sup>10</sup> or took<sup>11</sup> a woman; 2. The woman conceived; 3. The woman gave birth to a son; 4. The woman or the man named this son; 5. Finally, an explanation of the name is given. Stages 3 and 4 are often taken together: the woman gave birth to a named son. The text of Exod 2:1-10 can be considered as an extended form of this report: 1. A man from the house of Levi *went and took to wife* a daughter of Levi (2:1); 2. The woman conceived (2:2a); 3. She gave birth to a son (2:2b); 3b. *Interlude in which it is made clear that the son of the biological mother becomes the son of his adoptive mother* (2:2c-10c); 4. The adoptive mother named him Moses (2:10d); 5. Explanation of the name (2:10ef).

In comparison with the basic structure of the marriage and birth report, it is striking that it first says in the beginning the man “went” and, secondly, after the mention of the birth (2:2b), the giving of the name does not follow immediately but is postponed until the

---

<sup>8</sup>Cf. Childs, *Exodus*, 7; Willi-Plein, “Ort,” 110-118.

<sup>9</sup>The connection between Exod 1:15-22 and Exod 2:1-10 is stressed by the fact that the root ילד (“to give birth to”) occurs often in both passages: eleven times in Exod 1:15-22 (1:15, 16, 17 (2x), 18 (2x), 19 (2x), 20, 21), mostly in the form of מילדת (“midwives”), and nine times in Exod 2:1-10 (Exod 2:2, 3, 6 [2x], 7, 8, 9 [2x], 10). The relative independence of Exod 1:15-22 is expressed by the resemblance between the beginning (1:16) and the end (1:22) of the passage.

<sup>10</sup>For ידע in the meaning of “having intercourse,” see *THAT*, I, 682-701 (esp. 691); *TWAT*, III, 479-512 (esp. 494).

<sup>11</sup>לחך means literally “to take.” Cf. *THAT*, I, 875-879; *TWAT*, IV, 588-594. It can be used in the meaning of “take to wife,” as is the case in Exod 2:1. With the preposition ל it is used in Exod 21:10 and other texts, e.g., Gen. 4:19; 11:29; 22:19; 25:20 (cf. also Exod 34:16: “to take a wife for”). Cf. J. Scharbert, “Ehe und Eheschliessung in der Rechtssprache des Pentateuch und beim Chronisten,” in: G. Braulik (ed.), *Studien zum Pentateuch. Walter Kornfeld zum 60. Geburtstag* (Vienna: Herder 1977) 213-225.

end of the story (2:10d). Moreover, it is not the biological father or mother who gives the child its name, but another, i.e. the adoptive mother of the child, the daughter of Pharaoh. Between the report of the birth and the giving of the name, the text explains how a newborn son becomes an adopted son of a new mother. At the same time, the text makes clear that he was initially brought up by his own mother.

The story of the birth of Moses can also be considered as a tale.<sup>12</sup> The exposition consists of the command by Pharaoh that all Hebrew-born sons are to be executed (1:[15-]22). In Exod 1:16, they are to be killed by the midwives, in Exod 1:22, they are to be thrown into the Nile. Generally speaking, Moses would have had no chance of living. He would have remained without a name. Then the story introduces the first complication. A Levite marriage produces a son (2:1-2b). Because of the death penalty, this son brings crisis. Moses' mother then decides to save her child. She puts the baby into a basket prepared for the river and places it in the grass at the riverbank (Exod 2:3). The mother gives up her child in order to give him the chance of life.<sup>13</sup> The baby's sister watches to determine what happens to the child (Exod 2:4). However, this act by the mother heightens the tension of the story. A female member of the royal house, a person who has no relationship with the children of Israel, finds him (Exod 2:5). The daughter of Pharaoh recognizes him as a Hebrew, a boy condemned to death by the decree of her father. She has the power to condemn the baby to immediate death. This can be considered the climax of the story. After this point the dénouement starts, because the storyteller develops the account in such a direction that the princess does not condemn the child to his death. Instead, "she took pity on him" and cared for him (Exod 2:6). After this act, the sister of Moses approaches the daughter of Pharaoh, the biological mother acts as Moses' nurse (Exod 2:7-9) and the infant is given his name (Exod 2:10).

---

<sup>12</sup>For the genre of a tale, see, e.g., C. Westermann, *Die Verheißungen an die Väter: Studien zur Vätergeschichte* (FRLANT 116; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1976); G. W. Coats, *Genesis with an Introduction to Narrative Literature* (FOTL 1; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans 1983) 7-8 *et passim*. For the following see also G. W. Coats, "2 Samuel 12:1-7a," *Interpretation* 40 (1986) 170-174.

<sup>13</sup>Cf. A. Brenner, "Female Social Behavior: Two Descriptive Patterns within the 'Birth of the Hero' Paradigm," *VT* 36 (1986) 257-273 (esp. 269).

The story of the birth of Moses is often compared with stories known to other people in the Ancient Near East. The “birth of the hero” myth is a well-known and widely used model.<sup>14</sup> The difficult circumstances attending the birth and childhood of a hero are almost universal. One need only point to the Legend of Sargon of Akkad.<sup>15</sup> He too was set afloat on a river in a reed basket, rescued by a water-drawer, nurtured, and became in time a mighty hero and king. The specific modelling in Exod 2:1-10, however, deviates in many respects from the general motif.<sup>16</sup> The descent of the child is not completely anonymous and socially insignificant in that his Levitical origin is mentioned. In Exodus, nothing is written about a clear career at the royal court. After the explanation of the name, the narrative ends abruptly. The report of the birth has priority over the motif of the abandonment. It is not the aim of the author to tell the story of the earliest youth of Moses; he explains how a Levitical child becomes an Egyptian child. Moreover, it seems striking that the actors in Exod 2:1-10 are nearly exclusively women.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup>Cf. H. Gressmann, *Mose und seine Zeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1913); J. Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1933); O. Rank, *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero and Other Writings* (New York: Vintage Books 1964); A. Dantes, *The Study of Folklore* (Englewood: Prentice Hall 1965); D. B. Redford, “The Literary Motif of the Exposed Child,” *Numen* 14 (1967) 209-228; Brenner, “Female Social Behavior,” 257-273; Schmidt, *Exodus 1*, 55-57.

<sup>15</sup>The Legend of Sargon can be found in W. Beyerlin (ed.), *Religionsgeschichtliche Textbuch zum Alten Testament* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1975) 123-124; J. B. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1955) 119.

<sup>16</sup>Cf. Willi-Plein, “Ort,” 110-118. According to Durham (*Exodus*, 15), the form of the story of the birth of Moses is dictated by the larger theological purpose governing Exodus 1 and 2.

<sup>17</sup>With the exception of the action of the father (Exod 2:1ab: “a man from the house of Levi”), who has to play his role in the procreation, and the son (2:10a: “the child”), only women are the subjects of the verbs used in this passage: Moses’ biological mother (2:2a-3e, 9ef); Moses’ sister (2:4, 7); Moses’ adoptive mother, the daughter of Pharaoh (2:5-6; 8ab, 9a-d, 10b-f). In the genealogy (Exod 6:20; cf. Num. 26:57-59) the father is named (Amram), as is his wife (Jochebed).

### 3. Blanks in the Biblical Text

On several points, the text is open to interpretation or is unclear.<sup>18</sup> Who were this man and woman (Exod 2:1ab)? What is meant by the statement, the man “went” (Exod 2:1a)? Why does Moses’ birth follow immediately upon the reference to his parents’ marriage (Exod 2:2ab), given the fact that he also has a sister (Exod 2:4, 7) and a brother (cf. Exod 4:14)? Why was it possible to hide him for the specific period of three months (Exod 2:2cd)? Why could his mother no longer hide him (Exod 2:3a)? Why did she use asphalt and pitch? Why did she place the basket in the grass at the riverbank (Exod 2:3e)? How long did it stay there until the daughter of Pharaoh found it? Where did Pharaoh’s daughter and her servants go and how and why was the baby fetched (Exod 2:5)? How could Pharaoh’s daughter tell that Moses was a Hebrew child (Exod 2:6)? It mentions that the child grew and his mother brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter (Exod 2:10ab), but how long did Moses’ mother nurse him and how old was Moses at that time? Why couldn’t an Egyptian woman nurse him (Exod 2:7c)? These are questions which readers in subsequent generations have tried to answer in their commentaries and rewritings.<sup>19</sup>

### 4. An Overall Comparison between Exodus 1:22-2:10 and *Jubilees* 47:1-9

In this contribution, I shall thus confine myself to one of the rewritings of Exod 1:22-2:10, i.e., *Jub.* 47:1-9. In this part of his narrative, the author of *Jubilees* is concerned with the birth of Moses

---

<sup>18</sup>For the following see S.C. Reif, “Classical Jewish Commentators on Exodus 2,” in: M. Bar-Asher (ed.), *Studies in Hebrew and Jewish Languages Presented to Shelomo Morag* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press 1996) \*73-\*112.

<sup>19</sup>E.g., D. J. Harrington, “Birth Narratives in Pseudo-Philo’s Biblical Antiquities and the Gospels,” in: M. P. Horgan (ed.), *To Touch the Text: Biblical and Related Studies in Honor of Joseph A. Fitzmyer* (New York: Crossroad 1989) 316-324 (esp. 319). For an anthology of the interpretation in rabbinic and mediaeval Jewish literature of Exodus 1:22-2:10, see M.M. Kasher, *Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation, VII: Exodus* (New York: American Biblical Encyclopedia Society 1967) 35-58. See also A. Rosmarin, *Moses im Lichte der Agada* (New York: Goldblatt 1932) 45-59.



and the first twenty-one years of his life. The author struggles with some of the questions just mentioned. He tries to answer them with his rewriting.

As far as the overall structure is concerned, the text of Exodus 1:22-2:10 can be considered as both a marriage and birth report, and as a tale. It is surprising that *Jubilees* does not follow the structure of the marriage and birth report of the biblical text, as it does elsewhere.<sup>20</sup> As can be seen in the following table, the only element of the basic structure of a marriage and birth report taken over is the mention that Moses was born. The other elements taken over from Exodus do not belong to the basic structure of the birth report.

| <i>Exodus 2:1-10</i>                            | <i>Jubilees 47:1-9</i>   |
|---|--------------------------|
| A man from the house of Levi went (2:1a)        | Your father came (47:1a) |
| He took to wife a daughter of Levi --- (2:1b)   |                          |
| The woman conceived (2:2a)                      | ---                      |
| She gave birth to a son (2:2b)                  | You were born (47:1b)    |
| Interlude (2:2c-10c)                            | Interlude (47:2-9)       |
| The adoptive mother named him Moses --- (2:10d) |                          |
| Explanation of the name (2:10ef)                | ---                      |

The story of the birth of Moses can also be considered a tale. In this respect the narrative structure runs more or less parallel in both versions. However, there are some striking differences, as one can see in the following table.

| <i>Exodus 2:1-10</i>   | <i>Jubilees 47:1-9</i>   |
|--|--|
| 1. <i>Exposition</i> : Pharaoh's command that all Hebrew sons born are to be executed (1:15-22). | 1. <i>Exposition</i> : The return of Moses' father and his birth in a time of distress (47:1). |
| 2. <i>First complication</i> : A Levite marriage produces a son (2:1-2b).                        | 2. <i>First complication</i> : Pharaoh's command that all Hebrew sons                          |

---

<sup>20</sup>For an overview of the structure of the genealogies of *Jubilees* in comparison to the genealogies in Genesis, see J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten, *Primaeval History Interpreted: The Rewriting of Genesis 1-11 in the Book of Jubilees* (JSJSS 66; Leiden: Brill 2000) 113-124.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>3. <i>Second complication</i>: Moses' mother puts the baby into a basket prepared for the river and places it in the grass at the riverbank (2:3).</p> <p>4. <i>Climax</i>: Pharaoh's daughter recognizes him as a Hebrew (2:5-6c).</p> <p>5. <i>Dénouement</i>: The princess "took pity on him" and cared for him (2:6d). After this act, Moses' sister can go to Pharaoh's daughter, the biological mother acts as Moses' nurse (2:7-9).</p> <p>6. <i>Conclusion</i>: Moses was brought to Pharaoh's daughter and is given his name (2:10).</p> | <p>born are to be executed (47:2).</p> <p>3. <i>Second complication</i>: Moses' mother puts the baby into a basket prepared for the river and places it in the grass at the riverbank (47:3-4).</p> <p>4. <i>Climax</i>: Pharaoh's daughter finds him (47:5).</p> <p>5. <i>Dénouement</i>: The princess "took pity on him" (47:6). After this act, Moses' sister can go to Pharaoh's daughter, the biological mother acts as Moses' nurse (47:7-8).</p> <p>6. <i>Conclusion</i>: Moses is educated by his father, and is brought to the royal court (47:9).</p> |
|--|---|

The arrival of Moses' father and Moses' birth bring about a complication in the narrative of Exodus, because Moses was born in a situation of death penalty for every male newborn. In *Jubilees*, however, Moses' birth is explicitly mentioned as part of the exposition. The complication starts with the decree of the death penalty. As far as the conclusion is concerned, the name-giving is left out by *Jubilees*, whereas his education by his father and his bringing to the royal court is given more importance.

Although the narrative structure is parallel in both texts, there are only a few *verbatim quotations*. However, many *variations* strengthen the similarity between both texts. The variations are partly caused by the fact that the story of Exod 1-2 is told in *Jubilees* to Moses by the Angel of the Presence. Several elements told in the third person singular in the story of Exodus are put in the second person singular in *Jubilees* (*Jub.* 47:1a, b, 3c, 4a, d, 5c, 6b, 7a, 8b, d, 9a, b). In addition to the verbatim quotations and variations, there are many *additions* and some *omissions*.

In the following synoptic overview, I have tried to present a classification of the similarities and dissimilarities between Exodus 1:22-2:10 and *Jubilees* 47:1-9. I have used small caps and square brackets to highlight those elements of Exodus which do not occur in *Jubilees*, and vice versa, i.e., the omissions and additions. Small caps in one text correspond to square brackets in the other. I have used

normal script for the corresponding elements between both texts, i.e. the verbatim quotations of one or more words from the source text in *Jubilees*. I have used italics to indicate the variations between Exodus and *Jubilees*, other than additions or omissions. Sometimes there is a rearrangement of words and sentences. I have underlined those elements.<sup>21</sup>

| <i>Exodus 1:22-2:10</i> |   | <i>Jubilees 47:1-9</i>      |  |
|-------------------------|---|-----------------------------|--|
| 1:22a                   | Pharaoh [ ] commanded ALL HIS PEOPLE [ ].                                     | [cf. <i>Jub. 47:2a-3b</i> ] |  |
| b                       | <u>“Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall throw into the Nile.”</u> |                             |  |
| c                       | BUT YOU SHALL LET EVERY DAUGHTER LIVE.” [ ]                                   |                             |  |
| 1a                      | <i>A man from the house of Levi went</i> [ ]                                  | 1a                          | DURING THE SEVENTH WEEK, IN THE SEVENTH YEAR, IN THE FORTY-SEVENTH JUBILEE, <i>your father came</i> FROM THE LAND OF CANAAN. |
| b                       | AND TOOK TO WIFE A DAUGHTER OF LEVI.  |                             | [ ]  |
| 2a                      | THE WOMAN CONCEIVED   | b                           | <i>You were born</i> DURING THE FOURTH WEEK, IN ITS SIXTH YEAR, IN THE FORTY EIGHTH JUBILEE,                                 |
| b                       | <i>and bore a son;</i> [ ]  | c                           | WHICH WAS THE TIME OF DISTRESS FOR THE ISRAELITES.   |
| [cf. <i>Exod 1:22</i> ] |   | 2a                          | <u>Pharaoh, THE KING OF EGYPT</u>  |

<sup>21</sup>Quotations from the biblical text follow the Revised Standard Version, with slight modifications, whereas quotations from *Jubilees* are according to J. C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees, II* (CSCO 511; Scriptorum Aethiopicorum 88; Leuven: Peeters 1989). *Jub. 47:1-9* is nearly completely preserved in Latin. Both the Latin and the Ethiopic translations go back to a Greek translation of the Hebrew original. Cf. VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees, II*, vi-xxx; K. Berger, *Das Buch der Jubiläen* (JSHRZ 2.3; Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn 1981) 285-294. The edition of the Latin text of *Jub. 16:1-9* can be found in J.C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees, I* (CSCO 510; Scriptorum Aethiopicorum 87; Leuven: Peeters 1989) 298. The text-critical value of the Latin text of *Jub. 47:1-9* is discussed in the notes to the translation of the Ethiopic text of *Jub. 47:1-9* in VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees, II*, 305-308.

|    |  |    |  |
|----|--|----|--|
|    |  |    | <u>had given orders [ ]</u>                |
|    |  |    | REGARDING THEM                             |
|    |  | b  | <u>that they were to throw their</u>       |
|    |  |    | <u>sons – every male who was</u>           |
|    |  |    | <u>born – into the river. [ ]</u>          |
|    |  | 3a | THEY CONTINUED THROWING                    |
|    |  |    | (THEM IN) FOR SEVEN                        |
|    |  |    | MONTHS.                                    |
|    |  | b  | UNTIL THE TIME WHEN YOU                    |
|    |  |    | WERE BORN.                                 |
|    |  |    | [ ]  |
| c  | AND WHEN SHE SAW THAT HE                             |    |  |
|    | WAS A GOODLY CHILD,                                  |    |  |
| d  | <i>she hid him</i> for three months.                 | c  | <i>Your mother hid you</i> for three       |
|    |  |    | months.                                    |
| 3a | <i>When she could hide him no</i>                    | d  | <i>Then they told about her.</i>           |
|    | <i>longer</i>  |    |  |
| b  | <i>she took</i> for him a box MADE OF                | 4a | She <i>made</i> a box [ ] for you,         |
|    | BULRUSHES,   |    |  |
| c  | covered it with <u>asphalt</u> and                   | b  | covered it with <u>pitch</u> and           |
|    | <u>pitch</u> ;                                       |    | <u>asphalt</u> ,                           |
| d  | <u>and she put the child</u> in it [ ]               | c  | and put it in the grass at the             |
| e  | and put it in the grass at the                       |    | riverbank.                                 |
|    | riverbank.   | d  | <u>She put you in it</u> FOR SEVEN         |
|    |  |    | DAYS.                                      |
|    | [ ]  | e  | YOUR MOTHER WOULD COME                     |
|    |  |    | AT NIGHT                                   |
| 4a | And [ ] <i>his</i> sister <i>stood at a</i>          | f  | AND NURSE YOU,                             |
|    | <i>distance, to know what would</i>                  | g  | and DURING THE DAY <i>your</i>             |
|    | <i>be done to him.</i>                               |    | sister MIRIAM <i>would protect</i>         |
| 5a | [ ] The daughter of Pharaoh                          | 5a | AT THAT TIME TARMUTH, the                  |
|    | went out to bathe at the river,                      |    | daughter of Pharaoh, went                  |
|    |  |    | out to bathe in the river                  |
| b  | AND HER MAIDENS WALKED                               |    | [ ]  |
|    | BESIDE THE RIVER;                                    |    |  |
| c  | SHE SAW THE BOX IN THE GRASS                         |    |  |
| d  | and <i>sent</i> her <i>maid</i> to bring <i>it</i> . | b  | <u>and heard you crying.</u>               |
|    |  | c  | She <i>told</i> her <i>slaves</i> to bring |
|    | [ ]  |    | <i>you</i> ,                               |
|    |  | d  | SO THEY BROUGHT YOU TO                     |
| 6a | WHEN SHE OPENED IT                                   |    | HER.                                       |
| b  | SHE SAW THE CHILD;                                   |    | [ ]  |
| c  | <u>and lo, the babe was crying.</u>                  |    |  |
|    | [ ]  | 6a | SHE TOOK YOU OUT OF THE                    |
|    |  |    | BOX  |

|     |   |     |  |
|-----|---|-----|--|
| d   | She took pity on <i>him</i>                                       | b   | and took pity on <i>you</i> .  |
| e   | AND SAID:   | [ ] |  |
| f   | ‘THIS IS ONE OF THE HEBREWS’ CHILDREN’.                           |     |  |
| 7a  | Then <i>his</i> sister said to <i>the daughter of Pharaoh</i> :   | 7a  | Then <i>your</i> sister said to <i>her</i> :                             |
| b   | “Shall I go   | b   | “Shall I go  |
| c   | and call for you <i>a woman, a nurse</i> , from the Hebrew women, | c   | and call for you <i>one</i> of the Hebrew women <i>who will care for</i> |
|     | <i>to nurse the child</i> for you?”                               | d   | <i>and nurse this infant</i> for you?”                                   |
| 8a  | <i>The daughter of Pharaoh</i> said to her:                       | e   | [ <i>She</i> said to her:  |
| b   | “Go’.”  | f   | “‘Go’.” <sup>b</sup>   |
| c   | <i>The girl</i> went  | 8a  | <i>She</i> went  |
| d   | and called <i>the child’s</i> mother.                             | b   | and called <i>your</i> mother JOCHEBED.                                  |
| 9a  | AND PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER SAID TO HER:                               | [ ] |  |
| b   | “‘TAKE THIS CHILD AWAY,   |     |  |
| c   | AND NURSE HIM FOR ME,   | c   | <i>She</i> gave <i>her</i> wages   |
| d   | <i>I will give you YOUR wages’.</i> ”                             | [ ] |  |
| e   | THE WOMAN TOOK THE CHILD  | d   | <i>and she took care of you.</i>   |
| f   | <i>and she nursed him.</i>  | 9a  | AFTERWARDS,  |
|     | [ ]   |     | <i>when you had grown up,</i>  |
| 10a | <i>And the child</i> grew,  |     | <i>you were brought to</i>   |
| b   | and <i>she</i> brought <i>him</i> to Pharaoh’s daughter,          |     | Pharaoh’s daughter   |
| c   | and <i>he</i> became her son;                                     | b   | and <i>you</i> became her son.   |
| d   | AND SHE NAMED HIM MOSES,  | [ ] |  |
| e   | FOR SHE SAID:   |     |  |
| f   | “‘BECAUSE I DREW HIM OUT OF THE WATER’.”                          | c   | YOUR FATHER AMRAM TAUGHT YOU (THE ART OF) WRITING.                       |
|     | [ ]   | d   | AFTER YOU HAD COMPLETED THREE WEEKS (= 21 YEARS),                        |
|     |   | e   | HE BROUGHT YOU INTO THE ROYAL COURT.                                     |

## Notes:

a) Most of the Ethiopic manuscripts read “Hebrew women,” while Latin has “slave.” For text-critical reasons, most translations opt for “slaves.” Cf. VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees*, II, 306.

b) With the exception of one manuscript, these words from Exod 2:8 are not in the Ethiopic manuscripts. Cf. VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees*, II, 307.

## **5. An Analysis of the Rewriting of Exodus 1:22-2:10 in *Jubilees* 47:1-9**

### *Dating the Events*

The first difference between *Jubilees* and Exodus that strikes the eye is the dating of events. The author of *Jubilees* attaches great significance to the chronological system within which he frames his rewriting.<sup>22</sup> He puts the biblical narratives in a continuous chronological system, from the creation of the world until the entrance into the Promised Land, which took place 2450 years after the creation. This system is characterized by its heptadic arrangement: years, weeks of years, and jubilees of years. The history is divided into periods of jubilees. Each jubilee consists of seven weeks of years, i.e. seven times seven years.

Here, Moses' father arrived in Egypt in the seventh year of the seventh year-week of the 47th jubilee (cf. *Jub.* 47:1a), which is *anno mundi* (*a.m.*) 2303. Moses was born in the sixth year of the fourth year-week of the 48th jubilee, which is *a.m.* 2330. Between the arrival of Amram and the birth of Moses is a period of 27 years. Moreover, Moses remained 21 years in his parental house (*Jub.* 47:9d: "three weeks"). Later it is said that he remained 21 years in the royal court (*Jub.* 47:10a). So Moses was 42 years old when he ran away and arrived in Midian. This was during the sixth year of the third year-week of the 49th jubilee, which is *a.m.* 2372 (cf. *Jub.* 48:1). He lived for another 36 years in Midian, and then returned to Egypt in the second year of the second year-week of the 50th jubilee, which is *a.m.* 2410 (cf. *Jub.* 48:1), 40 years before the entrance into the Land. It is difficult to say if this chronological concept is the invention of our author, or that he was influenced by other biblical and extra-biblical systems of dating the events.

---

<sup>22</sup>Cf. J.C. VanderKam, "Studies in the Chronology of the Book of Jubilees," in: J.C. VanderKam, *From Revelation to Canon: Studies in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Literature* (JSJSup 62; Leiden: Brill 2000) 522-544.

The concept of the jubilee is peculiar, most probably is borrowed from Leviticus 25, but *Jubilees* interprets the concept in a different way.<sup>23</sup> In Leviticus, the “jubilee” is the 50th year, in which the individual Hebrew could be freed from slavery and return to his own property. For *Jubilees*, the “jubilee” is a period of 49 years. The total chronology of 2450 years is divided into 50 of these periods of 49 years. The 50th jubilee is the climax of the chronology, because the Israelites were liberated from the Egyptian slavery, after which they could enter the Land of their ancestors, which had been theirs since the division of the earth after the Flood. What in Leviticus is applied to each individual, is applied to the whole people in the 50th jubilee, in the book of *Jubilees*.<sup>24</sup>

### *Naming the Characters*

---

<sup>23</sup>VanderKam, “Studies in the Chronology,” 540-544; Cf. J.S. Bergsma, *The Jubilee from Leviticus to Qumran: A History of Interpretation* (VTS 115; Leiden: Brill 2007).

<sup>24</sup>Scott has put forward a far-reaching interpretation of the chronological system in the book of *Jubilees*. The chronological system is not restricted to the first 50 jubilees, but extends over the whole history, from the creation until the new creation. Scott assumes a *tripartite* division of the world history and argues for the principle of compensatory symmetry at work. The period of time between the destruction of the first temple and the new creation is more or less the mirror image of the period from creation until the destruction of the first temple. This means that the destruction of the temple is located in the exact centre of the history of the world (2940 *a.m.*, i.e. 60 jubilees after the creation of the world). According to Scott, the author of *Jubilees* considers the whole history of the world as a period of 5880 years (= 840 weeks of years = 120 jubilees). Because the interval of time between the creation and the first entrance into the Land of Israel is 50 jubilees, the interval of time between the second entrance and the culmination in the new creation must also be 50 jubilees. From this follows that the interval between the first and second entrance is exactly 20 jubilees. This is 490 years (= 10 jubilees) for the exilic period and 490 years for the post-exilic period. See J. M. Scott, *On Earth as in Heaven: The Restoration of Sacred Time and Sacred Space in the Book of Jubilees* (JSJSup 91; Leiden: Brill 2005) 73-158. Although it is true that *Jubilees* speaks in chapters 1 and 23 about a future that extends far beyond the entrance into the land, the representations of the author about this future, however, are not clear. Apart from the mention of a final judgment and some rather vague representations of the eschaton in these chapters, one cannot read very much about it.

A second difference is the naming of the characters. Exodus speaks about “a man from the house of Levi” and “a daughter of Levi” (Exod 2:1), about “his sister” (Exod 2:4, 7a), the daughter of Pharaoh (Exod 2:5-10), and of “Moses” (Ex 2:10). All the characters are anonymous, with the exception of Moses who is given his name at the end of the story. In contrast, *Jubilees* names all characters with the exception of Moses. The narrative starts with “your father” (*Jub.* 47:1a), who was already named “Amram” in the preceding chapter (cf. *Jub.* 46:9). Moses’ mother is called by her name “Jochebed” (cf. *Jub.* 47:8), his sister by her name “Miriam” (*Jub.* 47:4g), and the daughter of Pharaoh by her name “Tarmuth” (*Jub.* 47:5a).

Although Amram, Jochebed and Miriam are not called by their names in Exodus 1-2, their names are in accordance with the biblical data. In the genealogy of Exod 6:14-25, it is said that Amram married his aunt Jochebed (Exod 6:20: “Amram took to wife Jochebed his father’s sister”), and that she bore to him Aaron and Moses. In this genealogy, it is made clear that Amram is from the house of Levi. He is one of the sons of Kahath (Exod 6:18), who is one of the sons of Levi (Exod 6:16). This shows that the author of *Jubilees* also uses passages from the book of Exodus that he skips over in his rewriting. In the genealogy of Num. 26:57-59, it is mentioned that Jochebed, who was born to Levi in Egypt, bore to Amram not only Aaron and Moses, but also Miriam their sister. In Exod 15:20, Miriam is called the sister of Aaron. In contrast with the biblical books, Aaron does not occur at all in the book of *Jubilees*. This absence can be accidental since the author has abbreviated his story so drastically that he can find no place to mention Aaron. However, it is also possible that he is so focused on Moses as the receiver of the revelation that he just does not want to pay much attention to his fellow actors. It is Moses alone who is leading Israel out of Egypt, and it is Moses alone who goes up to Mount Sinai.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup>And not Moses and Joshua. See *Jub* 1:1-4. Cf. J. T. A. G. M. van Ruiten, “The Rewriting of Exodus 24:12-18 in Jubilees 1:1-4,” *BN* 79 (1995) 25-29; J. C. VanderKam, “The Scriptural Setting of the Book of Jubilees,” *DSD* 13 (2006) 61-72 (esp. 64). According to Ravid, in omitting any reference to Aaron in the Book of *Jubilees*, the author intended to undermine the legality of the Zadokites’ right to act as High Priests. See L. Ravid, “Purity and Impurity in the Book of *Jubilees*,” *JSP* 13 (2002) 61-86 (esp. 84). See the critical remarks on Ravid’s position by J. C. VanderKam, “Viewed from Another Angle: Purity and Impurity in the Book of



The name “Tarmuth,” the name of Pharaoh’s daughter, is not found in biblical literature. Flavius Josephus calls her the almost identical “Thermouthis” (*Ant.* 2.24). In rabbinic literature, she is called “Bithiah” (cf. *b. Meg* 13a; *Midr. Lev. Rab.* 1:3).

*The Stay of Amram in Canaan*

In *Jub.* 47:1, the author mentions that Moses’ father Amram comes “from the land of Canaan.” Nowhere is this stated in the biblical literature. The preceding chapter of the book of *Jubilees* explained how Moses’ father had left Egypt and gone on a journey to Canaan (cf. *Jub.* 46:10). This was connected with the burial of the bones of all Jacob’s sons, except those of Joseph, in Hebron (*Jub.* 46:9-10). The transfer of these bones is linked to a battle between the king of Egypt and the king of Canaan:

(5) Before he (= Joseph) died he ordered the Israelites to take his bones along at the time when they would leave the land of Egypt. (6) He made them swear about his bones because he knew that the Egyptians would not again bring him out and bury him on the day in the land of Canaan, since Makamaron, the king of Canaan – while he was living in the land of Asur – fought in the valley with the king of Egypt and killed him there. He pursued the Egyptians as far as the gates of Ermon. (7) He was unable to enter because another new king ruled Egypt. He was stronger than he, so he returned to the land of Canaan and the gates of Egypt were closed with no one leaving or entering Egypt. (8) Joseph died in the 46th jubilee, in the sixth week, during its second year. He was buried in the land of Egypt, and all his brothers died after him. (9) Then the king of Egypt went out to fight with the king of Canaan in the 47th jubilee, in the second week, during its second year. The Israelites brought out all the bones of Jacob’s sons except Joseph’s bones. They buried them in the field, in the double cave in the mountain. (10) Many returned to Egypt but a few of them remained on the mountain of Hebron. Your father Amram remained with them. (*Jub.* 46:5-10)

The specific way in which this story rewrites Exod 1:6, 8 is the result of some problems in the biblical text, such as the fact that Joseph is not buried in Canaan immediately after his death (Gen 50:24-26), the unmotivated mention of a new king (Exod 1:8) and a war (Exod 1:10), the unexplained change in the attitude of the Egyptians with regard to the children of Israel (Exod 1:9-12), and finally the formulation of a journey by Moses' father before his birth (Exod 2:1: "A man from the house of Levi *went*").<sup>26</sup>

*Jubilees* 46:5-6a refers to Gen 50:24-25 with variations. The direct speech of Gen 50:24-25 is not taken over. Moreover, the author of *Jubilees* concentrates mainly on Gen 50:25, the oath to carry up his bones, which he even mentions twice. From Gen 50:24, he takes over the reference to the exodus in *Jub.* 46:5b ("at the time when they would leave the land of Egypt"). The author integrates Gen 50:24-25 in his rewriting to solve the problem of the biblical text, which does not make clear why Joseph did not ask for his bones to be taken up to Canaan right away, as was the case with the bones of Jacob (Gen 49:29-33; 50:1-14).<sup>27</sup> The author of *Jubilees* suggests an answer to this question. A war had caused the border between Egypt and Canaan to be closed. It is for this reason that his bones could not be transported immediately to Canaan. Therefore, Joseph asked his brothers to make sure that he would be buried in Canaan. Gen 50:24-25 refers forward to the exodus out of Egypt. In the biblical text, Joseph's request is executed by Moses during the exodus from Egypt (Exod 13:19; cf. Josh 24:32). In his rewriting, the author of *Jubilees*

---

<sup>26</sup>For a study of *Jubilees* 46, see, B. Halpern-Amaru, "Burying the Fathers: Exegetical Strategies and Source Traditions in *Jubilees* 46," in: E. G. Chazon, D. Dimant and R. A. Clements (eds.), *Reworking the Bible: Apocryphal and Related Texts at Qumran. Proceedings of a Joint Symposium by the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature and the Hebrew University Institute for Advanced Studies Research Group on Qumran, 15-17 January, 2002* (STDJ 58; Leiden: Brill 2005) 135-152; J. T. A. G. M. van Ruiten, "Between Jacob's Death and Moses' Birth: The Intertextual Relationship between Genesis 50:15-Exodus 1:14 and *Jubilees* 46:1-16," in: A. Hilhorst, E. Puech, and E.J.C. Tigchelaar (eds.), *Flores Florentino: Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honour of Florentino García Martínez* (JSJSup; Leiden: Brill 2007) 467-489.

<sup>27</sup>See also the burial of Sarah (Gen 23:1-20), Abraham (Gen 25:1-11) and Isaac (Gen 35:27-29) in Hebron.

explains that Joseph knew what would happen in the near future (“Because *he knew* that the Egyptians would not again bring him out and bury him on the day in the land of Canaan”). The impossibility of transferring Joseph’s bones is not attributed to a change in the attitude of the Egyptians with regard to the children of Israel. This is in accordance with the description of the positive relationship between Egypt and Israel *Jub.* 46:1-2. The reversal takes place at a later stage, after Joseph’s death (*Jub.* 46:12-16; *Exod* 1:9-14).

The insertion of a war story offers the opportunity to explain the postponement of Joseph’s funeral in Canaan. He also uses this war story to examine the rise of a new king. The text of *Exod* 1:8 looks straightforward.<sup>28</sup> However, the failure of the writer to mention the death of the previous king and the subsequent succession led the author of *Jubilees* to introduce a story in which the old king died in the war between Egypt and Canaan, and in which a new king was appointed.<sup>29</sup>

The second part of the addition deals with the burial of the bones of all Jacob’s sons, except those of Joseph, in Hebron (*Jub.* 46:9-11). The transfer of these bones is linked to the mention of their deaths (*Jub.* 46:4; *Exod* 1:6). The author of *Jubilees* specifies that they died after Joseph (*Jub.* 46:8c). This is not said explicitly in the biblical text although it can be derived from *Gen* 50:24-25. The burial of the bones is made possible by yet another battle between the king of Egypt and the king of Canaan. The burial of the bones was executed by the children of Israel (*Jub.* 46:9b), who are not specified but are meant to be the (grand-) children of the patriarchs. After the burial of the patriarchs, most of the Israelites returned to Egypt. A few of them, however, remained on the mountain of Hebron, among

---

<sup>28</sup>According to A. Salvesen, *Symmachus in the Pentateuch* (JSM 15; Manchester: University of Manchester 1991) 63, the mention of a “different” (אחר) king would have been more obvious.

<sup>29</sup>In rabbinic literature there are arguments as to whether this king was really a different king or merely the same one implementing different policies with respect to the children of Israel. Cf. *Midrash Exodus Rabbah* 1:8. Some of the ancient versions of the biblical text seem to reflect the same problem: Septuagint reads ἕτερος (“other”), Aquila ἄλλος (“other”), and Symmachus δεύτερος (“second”). Josephus mentions that the king passed to another dynasty (*Ant.* II, 202). See Salvesen, *Symmachus*, 63. *Jubilees* reads “another new king.”

whom was Moses' father Amram, the grandson of Levi (cf. Exod 6:16-20; Num 26:58-59).

The mention of Amram is motivated by Exod 2:1 ("And a man from the house of Levi went").<sup>30</sup> The author of *Jubilees* interprets this phrase as "your father came from the land of Canaan" (*Jub.* 47:1). It would not have been necessary, of course, to place Amram on the mountain of Hebron. This is motivated, however, by the activities that have taken place, i.e., the burial of the bones of Joseph's brothers at Hebron.<sup>31</sup>

The reason why Amram and the others stayed in Canaan is not made clear. It may possibly have been because after a while the king of Canaan prevailed over Egypt: "The king of Canaan conquered the king of Egypt and closed the gates of Egypt" (*Jub.* 46:11). It is not said for how long the gates of Egypt remained closed. In any case, Amram stayed for 40 years in Canaan. He arrived in Canaan in the second year of the second year-week of the 47th jubilee, which is *a.m.* 2263 (cf. *Jub.* 46:9), and he arrived back in Egypt in the seventh year of the seventh year-week of the 47th jubilee, which is *a.m.* 2303 (cf. *Jub.* 47:1a).

Nowhere in the biblical literature does it state that the brothers of Joseph were also to be buried in Canaan. According to the author of *Jubilees*, this must have been quite natural. Not only the patriarchs and Joseph were to be buried in Canaan, but also his brothers. This seems to be in line with the family harmony mentioned earlier. Both Joseph and his brothers are treated equally, but that is not the same as a diminution of Joseph. Moreover, it is important for the author of

---

<sup>30</sup>According to Halpern-Amaru, by placing Amram on the mountain of Hebron the author of *Jubilees* assigns to Amram the role that he has taken away from the biblical Joseph. *Jubilees* consistently deconstructs the biblical characterization of Joseph. See Halpern-Amaru, "Burying the Fathers," 144-145. I am not convinced that a deconstruction of Joseph and an elevation of Levi at the expense of Joseph have influenced the rewriting here.

<sup>31</sup>According to Halpern-Amaru, Amram was placed on the mountain because the author of *Jubilees* wished to put him on one line with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. See Halpern-Amaru, "Burying the Fathers," 144 (note 19).

*Jubilees* that all the children of Israel were liberated from Egypt, and that all could enter Canaan.<sup>32</sup>

The fact that the author of *Jubilees* chose a war story could according to some exegetes reflect a historical situation. The kings of Canaan and Egypt might reflect the conflicts between the Seleucides who controlled Palestine and the Ptolomies in Egypt.<sup>33</sup> It can, however, also be legendary. It is possibly motivated by the text of Exodus, which speaks about a war (Exod 1:10: “if war comes”).<sup>34</sup> The biblical text states that the new king of Egypt is afraid that Israel will unite with the enemy and fight against Egypt, but the war is not elaborated upon as such.

The author of *Jubilees* probably uses an already existing tradition about a war between Egypt and Canaan in relation to the postponement of Joseph’s burial and the transmission of the bones of Joseph’s brothers from Egypt to Canaan. The story about the transport of the bones of Joseph’s brothers, sometimes in relation to a war, can be found in several other texts: 4Q543-547 (= 4QVisions of Amram), the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (*Test. Sim.* 8:2; *Test. Benj.* 12:3; *Test. Gad* 8:4; *Test. Levi* 19:5; *Test. Zebulon* 10:6; *Test. Dan* 7:2), Flavius Josephus (*Ant.* 2.199-200) and the New Testament (Acts 7:15-16).<sup>35</sup>

### *Marriage Report and Chronological Difficulties*

The marriage report (Exod 2:1b: “He took to wife a daughter of Levi”) and the reference to the subsequent conception (Exod 2:2a: “The woman conceived”) is omitted in *Jubilees*. The narrative passes

---

<sup>32</sup>*Jub.* 44:33-34 mentions that five of the grandsons of Jacob died in Egypt, and were buried there.

<sup>33</sup>Berger, *Buch der Jubiläen*, 537-538; VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees*, 81-82. Charles, *Book of Jubilees*, 245-246, point to an earlier period in history.

<sup>34</sup>So also Berger, *Buch der Jubiläen*, 537.

<sup>35</sup>Cf. Halpern-Amaru, “Burying the Fathers,” 146-152. Likewise, in rabbinic literature it is said that the bones not only of Joseph but also of his brothers were eventually brought for burial to Hebron. Cf. *Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael*, *Beshallah*, Introduction; *Mekhilta de Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai* 14; *Midrash Genesis Rabbah* 100:11.

on directly from “your father came” to “you were born.” The author of *Jubilees* could have read the phrase “A man from the house of Levi went” (Exod 2:1a) as “Amram went to Canaan to bury the bones of his grandfather Levi,” whereas he read the subsequent “And he took to wife” (Exod 2:1b) as “your father came back from Canaan to marry a daughter of Levi.” However, according to *Jubilees* there is a period of 27 years between Amram’s return (*a.m.* 2303) and Moses’ birth (*a.m.* 2330). *Jubilees* 47:4g (cf. Exod 2:4) presupposes the birth of a sister prior to Moses’ birth, whereas the biblical data also reports an older brother, Aaron. The marriage between Amram and Jochebed must therefore have taken place at least some years before Moses’ birth. Since Jochebed was born in Egypt (cf. Num 26:59), and it is not said that she went with Amram to Canaan, nor that she came back with him to Egypt, it seems most probable that the marriage took place in Egypt before *a.m.* 2330.

The omission of the marriage report is quite unusual because it is an important issue for the author of *Jubilees*.<sup>36</sup> He even adds a marriage into reports of events where the biblical text does not have a marriage report. The author is very interested in genealogical affairs (cf. *Jub.* 4:7-28, 33; 8:1-8; 10:18; 11:1-17; 12:9-11; 19:10-14; 28:1-24; 34:20). Halpern-Amaru has proposed that the reason for the omission may have been that Amram, grandson of Levi, married Jochebed, daughter of Levi, i.e., he married his aunt (cf. Exod 6:20). The relationship between Amram and Jochebed is too well documented in the Bible to rework it into another kind of relationship.<sup>37</sup> This might otherwise have been preferable inasmuch as a marriage between an aunt and a nephew is not permitted according to Levitical law (Lev 20:19: “You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother’s sister or of your father’s sister, for that is to make naked one’s near kin; they shall bear their iniquity”).<sup>38</sup> The author of *Jubilees* was indeed unwilling to confirm that an impure marriage had produced Moses. Therefore, he just omitted the

---

<sup>36</sup>Cf. Note 20.

<sup>37</sup>Cf. B. Halpern-Amaru, *The Empowerment of Women in the Book of Jubilees* (JSJSS 60; Leiden: Brill 1999) 122-124.

<sup>38</sup>The *Jubilees* genealogies also avoid this kind of relationship between husband and wife elsewhere. Cf. Halpern-Amaru, *Empowerment*, 123.

marriage report between Amram and Jochebed. According to rabbinic literature, before Sinai this Levitical law was only concerned with maternal relationships. In their eyes, Levi had married two different women, one of whom was the mother of Kahath, and the other of Jochebed (cf. *b. Sota* 58b).<sup>39</sup>

Although it is hardly imaginable that the author could accept that Moses descended from a marriage prohibited by Lev 18:12; 19:20, the omission of the marriage report might also be caused by chronological problems concerning Moses' ancestors. It is striking that most of the chronological data of the Levitical line (Levi and his sons) are left out when one compares this, for example, with the dates of the births of all sons of Jacob (cf. *Jub.* 28). The book of *Jubilees* does not mention the births of Amram and Jochebed, nor their marriage, nor the births of Miriam and Aaron. It does not mention the death of Amram. In contrast to the biblical data, *Jubilees* speaks about a war, 21 years after Joseph's death, Amram's subsequent stay of 40 years in Canaan, and Moses' birth 27 years after his return from Canaan. The relative silence of the author of *Jubilees* with regard to this priestly chronology has possibly to do with a certain tension between his own chronological system and the biblical data.

Biblical data raise questions with regard to the chronology related to the early history of Israel.<sup>40</sup> Genesis 15:13 puts the length of the oppression of Israel in Egypt at 400 years, whereas Gen 15:16 says that the fourth generation will come back to Canaan. Four generations can hardly be the same as 400 years.<sup>41</sup> MT Exod 12:40 puts the length of Israel's stay in Egypt at 430 years: "The sojourning of the children of Israel, while they sojourned in the land of Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years." One can find this reading also in the Targumim, the Peshitta and the Vulgate. The Samaritan

---

<sup>39</sup>Cf. Halpern-Amaru, *Ibidem*.

<sup>40</sup>For the chronology in the Old Testament see, e.g., J. Hughes, *Secrets of Times: Myth and History in Biblical Chronology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 1990); G. Larsson, *The Secret System: A Study in the Chronology of the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill 1973).

<sup>41</sup>In Gen 15:13, 400 years probably means a very long time between Abraham and the exodus from Egypt. See B. Ziemer, *Abram – Abraham. Kompositionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu Genesis 14, 15 und 17* (BZAW 350; Berlin: de Gruyter 2005) 260.

Pentateuch, however, reads: “The sojourning of the children of Israel *and their fathers*, while they sojourned in *the land of Canaan and* the land of Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years.” The Septuagint is comparable to the Samaritan Pentateuch: “The sojourning of the children of Israel in *the land of Canaan and* the land of Egypt, while they *and their fathers* sojourned, was four hundred and thirty years.”<sup>42</sup> Moreover, the Samaritan Pentateuch of Exod 6:20 reads “Amram took to wife Jochebed his father’s sister and she bore him Aaron and Moses, the years of the life of Amram being one hundred and thirty-six years,” whereas the massoretic text reads “one hundred and thirty-seven years.” The reading of the Samaritan Pentateuch occurs also in the Septuagint of Exod 6:20 (version A), and in *4QVisions of Amram*. The Septuagint of Exod 6:20 (version B) reads “one hundred and thirty-two years.”<sup>43</sup>

For the purpose of this article, we start from the reading of the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuagint of Exod 12:40, and date some events in Genesis and Exodus in relation to the entrance of Abram in Canaan, when he was 75 years old:<sup>44</sup>

|                          |    |
|--------------------------|----|
| Abram (75) enters Canaan | 0  |
| Birth Isaac              | 25 |
| Birth Jacob              | 85 |
| Birth Levi               | ?  |

---

<sup>42</sup>The *Aramaic Levi Document* (62-82 = 11:1-13:1); Josephus (*Ant.* II.318), and the New Testament (Gal 3:16-17) witness the reading of the Samaritan Pentateuch. See P. Grélot, “Quatre Cents Trente Ans (Ex 12,40),” in: L. Avarez Verdes and E.J. Alonso Hernandez (eds.), *Homenaje a Juan Prado: Miscelanea de estudios biblicos y hebraicos* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas 1975) 559-570 (esp. 559-560). See also the massoretic accentuation of Gen 15:13. The position of the Atnach point to the possibility that the massorettes did not read 400 years as the period of the oppression of Israel in Egypt, but as the period of Israel in Canaan and Egypt. Cf. Ziemer, *Abram – Abraham*, 261-262.

<sup>43</sup>Cf. P. Grélot, “Quatre Cents Trente Ans (Ex 12,40),” in: L. Avarez Verdes and E.J. Alonso Hernandez (eds.), *Homenaje a Juan Prado: Miscelanea de estudios biblicos y hebraicos* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas 1975) 559-570 (esp. 561); E. Puech, *Qumrân grotte 4.22: Textes araméens. I: 4Q529-549* (DJD 31; Oxford: Clarendon 2001) 285-286.

<sup>44</sup>For the biblical data, see: Gen 12:4; 15:13, 16; 17:17; 21:5; 25:26; 35:28; 37:2; 41:46; 47:9; 47:28; 50:26; Exod 6:16, 18, 20; 7:6; 12:40-41.



|                       |     |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Birth Joseph          | ?   |
| Jacob reenters Canaan | ?   |
| Marriage Levi         | ?   |
| Death Isaac           | 205 |
| Jacob enters Egypt    | 215 |
| Birth Amram           | ?   |
| Birth Jochebed        | ?   |
| Death Jacob           | 232 |
| Death Joseph          | ?   |
| Death Levi            | ?   |
| Birth Miriam          | ?   |
| Birth Aaron           | 347 |
| Birth Moses           | 350 |
| Exodus from Egypt     | 430 |

Some events are difficult to link to the arrival of Abram in Canaan. Jacob re-enters Canaan before Isaac's death (Gen 35:27-29). Some time after Jacob's re-entering of Canaan, Joseph was 17 years old (Gen 37:2). Joseph died at the age of 110 years (Gen 50:26), which was after Jacob's death. It is also impossible to integrate the life spans of Levi (Exod 6:16: 137 years), Qahat (Exod 6:18: 133 years) and Amram (SamP Exod 6:20: 136 years; MT: 137 years) in this system. In the *Aramaic Levi Document*,<sup>45</sup> one can find a genealogy

---

<sup>45</sup>It is likely that the author of *Jubilees* also knew and used the traditions on which the *Aramaic Document of Levi* is based. The *Aramaic Document of Levi* was possibly even a direct source for *Jubilees*. Grélot and others opt for a dependency of *Jubilees* on the *Testament of Levi*. See P. Grélot, "Le coutumier sacerdotal ancien dans le Testament araméen de Lévi," *RQ* 15 (1991) 253-263 (esp. 255); idem, "Le livre des Jubiles et le testament de Lévi," in: P. Casetti, O. Keel, and A. Schenker (eds.), *Mélanges Dominique Barthélemy: Études bibliques offertes à l'occasion de son 60e anniversaire* (OBO 38; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1981) 109-131. So also, e.g., M. Stone, "Ideal Figures and Social Context: Priest and Sage in the Early Second Temple Age," in: P. D. Miller et al. (eds.), *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1987) 575-586. See also Grélot, "Quatre Cents Trente Ans," in: A. Verdes and A. Hernandez (eds.), *Homenaje a Juan Prado*, 559-570; Puech, *ibidem*; H. Drawnel, *An Aramaic Wisdom Text from Qumran: A New Interpretation of the Levi Document* (JSJSup 86; Leiden: Brill 2004) 63-75; J.C. Greenfield, M.E. Stone, and E. Eshel, *The Aramaic Levi Document: Edition, Translation, Commentary* (SVTP 19; Leiden: Brill 2004) 19-22; M. de Jonge, "The Testament of Levi and 'Aramaic Levi'," *RQ* 13 (1988) 367-385 (esp. 373-376) (reprinted in *Jewish Eschatology: Early Christian Christology and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*

that contains chronological information referring to Levi's life.<sup>46</sup> The events between Levi's birth and death can be dated according to this chronology:<sup>47</sup>

|                             |     |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Birth Levi                  | 167 |
| Birth Joseph                | 175 |
| Jacob reenters Canaan       | 185 |
| Marriage Levi and Melka     | 195 |
| Birth Gershon               | 197 |
| Birth Qahat                 | 201 |
| Death Isaac                 | 205 |
| Birth Merari                | 207 |
| Jacob enters Egypt          | 215 |
| Birth Amram                 | 231 |
| Birth Jochebed              | 231 |
| Death Jacob                 | 232 |
| Marriage Amram and Jochebed | 261 |
| Death Joseph                | 285 |
| Death Levi                  | 304 |

The chronological information from the *Aramaic Levi Document* fits in with the biblical chronology, calculating from the entrance of Abram to Canaan, and interpreting the 430 years of Exod 12:40

---

[NovTSup 63; Leiden: Brill 1991] 244-262). According to Kugler, a so-called "Levi-apocryphon" was the source for both the *Aramaic Levi Document* and *Jubilees*; cf. R.A. Kugler, *From Patriarch to Priest: The Levi-Priestly Tradition from Aramaic Levi to Testament of Levi* (SBLEJL 9; Atlanta: Scholars Press 1996) 138. According to Becker both the *Aramaic Levi Document* and *Jubilees* go back to common oral traditions; cf. J. Becker, *Untersuchungen zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Testamente der zwölf Patriarchen* (AGJU 8; Leiden: Brill 1970) 86.

<sup>46</sup>See *Aramaic Levi Document*, 62-82, which is in the versification of Greenfield, Stone and Eshel: *Aramaic Levi Document* 11:1-13:1.

<sup>47</sup>Cf. the table in Drawnel, *Aramaic Wisdom Text*, 304, and in Greenfield, Stone and Eshel, *Aramaic Levi Document*, 199. I have transposed the dates of the Levi text, which are related to the life of Levi, into the chronology that calculates the years from the entrance of Abram to Canaan.

according to the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuagint.<sup>48</sup> It makes it possible to incorporate the biblical data that were difficult to place in the chronological system. It also provides some new events, the mention of Levi's wife, the date of their marriage, the dates of their sons' births, and the date of the marriage between Amram and Jochebed. These data do not conflict with the biblical data. The death of Qahat can be dated to 334.<sup>49</sup>

*4QVisions of Amram* also offers some chronological information.<sup>50</sup> Amram dies at the age of 136 (following Samaritan Pentateuch), which is year 152 of the exile of Israel in Egypt. Also in this year Miriam married at the age of 30, when Aaron was 20 years old. This gives the following picture.

|                            |     |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Jacob enters Egypt         | 215 |
| Birth Amram                | 231 |
| Stay in Canaan of 41 years | ?   |
| Birth Miriam               | 337 |
| Birth Aaron                | 347 |
| Death Amram                | 367 |
| Marriage Miriam and Uzziel | 367 |

These data fit in with the biblical data and those of the *Aramaic Document of Levi*. The exact date of the Amram's stay in Canaan for 41 years is not derivable from *4QVisions*. Assuming that all the patriarchs were buried together in Canaan, with the exception of Joseph, then the beginning of the stay in Canaan must have been shortly after Benjamin's death. Amram would have been back in

---

<sup>48</sup>The chronological calculation of *Aramaic Levi Document* is also close to 4Q559 (*Biblical Chronology*), but his text is largely restored. See Greenfield, Stone and Eshel, *Aramaic Levi Document*, 194. See the translation in M. O. Wise, "To Know the Times and the Seasons: A Study of the Aramaic Chronograph 4Q559," *JSP* 15 (1997) 3-51 (esp. 11); W. Nebe, "4Q559 'Biblical Chronology'," *ZAH* 10 (1997) 85-88 (esp. 86).

<sup>49</sup>The only remarkable point is the high ages of Amram and Jochebed at the birth of Aaron (116 years) and Moses (119 years) given the biblical data (347 and 350). Cf. Grélot, "Quatre Cents Trente Ans," 560.

<sup>50</sup>J.T. Milik, "4Q Visions de Amram et une citation d'Origène," *RB* (1972) 77-97 (esp. 97); Puech, *ibidem*; Halpern-Amaru, "Burying the Fathers" in Chazon, Dimant and Clements (eds.), *Reworking the Bible*, 146-152.

Egypt in time for the birth of Aaron, provided Benjamin's death was in 306.<sup>51</sup> However, Miriam was born during Amram's stay in Canaan, which is an internal contradiction. Also Qahat's death in 334 would have taken place during this period, which seems odd.

The book of *Jubilees* has its own chronological system.<sup>52</sup> The fiftieth jubilee (2450 *a.m.*) is the climax, because the Israelites were liberated from the Egyptian slavery, after which they could enter the land of their ancestors. The exodus takes place 40 years earlier in 2410 *a.m.* Moreover, according to biblical data Moses was 80 years old at the time of the exodus. This corresponds to the date of his birth in 2330 *a.m.* (*Jub* 47:1). In addition, *Jubilees* explains that Amram brought Moses to Pharaoh in 2351 *a.m.* (*Jub.* 47:9). Moreover, it dates Amram's stay in Canaan, which was 40 years (and not 41 years) according to *Jubilees*: 2263-2303 *a.m.* This period started 21 years after Joseph's death.<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup>According to *Test. Benj.* 1:1-2; 12:2, Benjamin was born in Jacob's hundredth year, and he lived a hundred and twenty-five years. This would give a date for Benjamin's death in 311 from the entrance of Abram to Canaan. One manuscript of *Test. Benj.* reads "a hundred and twenty years," a reading not accepted by Hollander and De Jonge. Cf. H.W. Hollander and M. de Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Commentary* (SVTP 8; Leiden: Brill 1985). Note, however, that *Test. Benj.* 12:2 also read that the brothers took up the bones of their fathers in the ninety-first year after the entrance of Israel in Egypt, which would date the burial in 306.

<sup>52</sup>The period of 430 years (from Abram's entrance in Canaan until the exodus) seems to play no role. Between the entrance of Abram into Canaan (1954 *a.m.*) and the entrance of Jacob in Egypt (2172 *a.m.*), *Jubilees* has 218 years, whereas between the entrance of Jacob in Egypt and the exodus (2410 *a.m.*), it has 238 years. Note however, that despite the fact that the author of *Jubilees* puts Abraham's death in 2060 *a.m.*, which is 184 years after his birth in 1876 *a.m.*, he confirms several times (e.g., *Jub.* 22:2; 23:8) that Abraham died at the age of 175 years. This would give a date for his death in 2051. This is 400 years before the entrance of Israel in Canaan, which would be in line with Gen 15:13 (cf. *Jub.* 14:13). See J.C. VanderKam, "Studies in the Chronology of the Book of *Jubilees*," 522-544 (esp. 539).

<sup>53</sup>This would fit in with Benjamin's death 21 years after Joseph's death, although *Jubilees* does not mention this explicitly. The year 2263 *a.m.* is also according to *Jubilees* 91 years after the entrance of Israel in Egypt (2172 *a.m.*). According to *Jub.* 32:33 Benjamin was born in 2143 *a.m.*, which would give him a total number of a hundred and twenty years. See also *Test. Gad* 1:1; 8:5 where one can read that Gad lived a hundred and twenty-seven years, whereas the burial will be after five

|                            |                       |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Birth Levi                 | 2127 <i>a.m.</i>      |
| Birth Joseph               | 2134 <i>a.m.</i>      |
| Jacob reenters Canaan      | 2136 <i>a.m.</i>      |
| Marriage Levi x Melka      | ?                     |
| Birth Gershon              | ?                     |
| Birth Qahat                | ?                     |
| Death Isaac                | 2162 <i>a.m.</i>      |
| Birth Merari               | ?                     |
| Jacob enters Egypt         | 2172 <i>a.m.</i>      |
| Birth Amram                | ?                     |
| Birth Jochebed             | ?                     |
| Death Jacob                | 2188 <i>a.m.</i>      |
| Marriage Amram x Jochebed  | ?                     |
| Death Joseph               | 2242 <i>a.m.</i>      |
| Death Levi                 | ?                     |
| Stay in Canaan of 41 years | 2263-2303 <i>a.m.</i> |
| Birth Miriam               | ?                     |
| Birth Aaron                | ?                     |
| Birth Moses                | 2330 <i>a.m.</i>      |
| Death Amram                | ?                     |
| Marriage Miriam x Uzziel   | ?                     |
| Moses to Pharaoh           | 2351 <i>a.m.</i>      |
| Exodus from Egypt          | 2410 <i>a.m.</i>      |

The great silence with regard to the Levite family is striking. *Jubilees* has only the date of Levi's birth. Moreover, it has a date for the period of Amram in Canaan, which was not derivable in *4QVisions of Amram*. However, no date is given for the marriage of Levi and Melka, nor for the birth of their sons. Also the birth of Amram and his marriage to Jochebed are not mentioned. When one tries to integrate the years of these events known from the *Aramaic Levi Document* and *4QVisions of Amram* into the chronology of *Jubilees* serious problems occur. The birth of Amram (231 years after the entrance of Abram in Canaan) is 16 years after Israel's descent into Egypt, which is according to the system of *Jubilees* 2188 *a.m.*, the same year as Jacob's death. This would give a date for his marriage with Jochebed (at the age of 30) in 2218 *a.m.*, and for his death (136 or 137 years later) in 2324 or 2325 *a.m.* This would mean that

---

years. This corresponds with *Jub.* 28:20 and *Jub.* 46:9 (Gad is born in 2131 *a.m.*, whereas his burial is 132 [127+5] years later in 2263 *a.m.*).

Amram died before Moses' birth! Moreover, at that time Miriam would have been only seven or eight years old, whereas according to *4QVisions of Amram* Miriam marries when she is 30 in the same year that Amram dies. When one puts Amram's death after Moses' transportation to the royal court (2351 *a.m.*), then new problems arise because Miriam would have been at least 34, which contradicts the data of *4QVisions*.<sup>54</sup>

In conclusion, one can say that the omission of the chronological data about Moses' ancestors (birth, marriage, death) in *Jubilees* is at least partly due to these chronological problems. It shows the conflict between two chronological systems. In the chronological system mirrored in the Bible, *Aramaic Document of Levi* and *4QVisions of Amram*, the events calculated from the entry of Abram into Canaan until the exodus occur in a period of 430 years, which can be divided in two periods of 215 years (215 years before and after Israel's descent to Egypt). The chronological system of *Jubilees* is focused on the symbolic value of 50 jubilees from the creation until the entry into the Promised Land, and cannot be harmonized with the other system. The omissions of the genealogical data with regard to Moses' parents and grandparents is a way to camouflage these problems.

### *Three Months of Hiding*

In the continuation of the narrative, the author of *Jubilees* more or less follows the storyline of Exodus. There are a few additions, some omissions and several variations, as can be seen in the synoptic overview.

The author of *Jubilees* omits the phrase, "And when she saw that he was a goodly child" (Exod 2:2c).<sup>55</sup> The subsequent mention

---

<sup>54</sup>See also note 55.

<sup>55</sup>I don't know the reason for the omission. Ezekiel the Tragedian (*Exagoge* 14) and Flavius Josephus (*Ant.* II:218) also omit the phrase, although the excellence of Moses is revealed to his father in a dream (*Ant.* II:210-217). The word טוב can be applied to moral qualities as well as to physical appearance. The Septuagint translates ἁσμενος ("fine," "handsome") which can refer to physical qualities. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* translated with "viable" (בר קיימא). Moses' mother sees that her son is healthy despite his premature birth (see below). Therefore she tries

of a period of hiding, i.e., three months (Exod 2:2d), has produced a tradition in aggadic literature about a premature birth of Moses, i.e., in the sixth or seventh month of the pregnancy of Jochebed.<sup>56</sup> There is another example of this in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, on Exod 2:2*: “The woman conceived and bore a son *at the end of six months*. When she saw he was *viable*, she hid him for three months, *which gives a total of nine*.” Also in the *Mekhilta* can be read: “The Egyptians counted nine months for her, but she bore *in six months*.”<sup>57</sup> The clue to this tradition is written in Exod 2:2: that Jochebed hid Moses for three months. This would make sense only if the Egyptians expected the baby three months later than its actual birth.

In another, probably later, tradition it is said that Moses was born six months after the remarriage of Amram and Jochebed. After the decree of Pharaoh to throw all newborn Hebrew boys into the river, Amram divorced Jochebed, who was at that moment already three months pregnant (cf. *Midr. Exod. Rab.* 1:13, 20). However,

---

to keep him. Rabbinic literature tries to explain the significance of the description: “The woman conceived and bore a son and she saw that he was fine. R. Meir taught: His name was Tob. R. Josiah: His name was Tobiah (‘The Lord is good’). R. Judah: He was worthy of the prophecy. The others say: he was born circumcised” (*Midr. Exod. Rab.* 1:20; cf. *b. Sotah* 12a). Some rabbis connected it with the beginning of Genesis, “When Moses was born the house was filled with light. For here it is written: ‘She saw him, that he was good’, and elsewhere we read that ‘God saw the light, that is was good’ (Gen. 1:4).” Cf. Rosmarin, *Moses*, 50; Kasher, *Encyclopedia*, 39-40; G. Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism* (SPB 4; Leiden: Brill 1973) 184-185; A. Salvesen, *Symmachus in the Pentateuch* (JSSM 15; Manchester: Manchester University Press 1991) 67.

<sup>56</sup>P. van der Horst, “Seven Month’s Children in Jewish and Christian Literature from Antiquity,” *ETHL* 54 (1978) 346-360 (esp. 234-235) (reprint in idem, *Essays on the Jewish World on Early Christianity* [NTOA, 14; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1990] 233-247). Cf. also L. Ginzberg, *The Legend of the Jews*, V, 397, note 44; E. B. Levine, “Paralles to Exodus of Pseudo-Jonathan and Neophyti I,” in: A. Diez Macho (ed.), *Neophyti I, vol. III* (Madrid-Barcelona: Ediciones Cristiandad 1971), 424; R. Bloch, “Moïse dans la tradition rabbinique,” in: H. Cazelles et al. (eds.), *Moïse, l’homme de l’alliance* (Paris: Desclée 1955) 102-118; D. Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (London: The Athlone Press 1956) 7; J. Heinemann, “210 Years of Egyptian Exile,” in *JJS* 22 (1971) 19-30; M. Abraham, *Légendes juives apocryphes sur la vie de Moïse* (Paris: Geuthner 1925) 49.

<sup>57</sup>J.N. Epstein – E. Z. Melamed, *Mekhilta de Rabbi Shim'on bar Yohai* (Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdanim 1955) 6, 17.

Miriam rebuked her father, and after this he remarried immediately. The Egyptians considered the return of Jochebed as the beginning of the pregnancy.<sup>58</sup>

*Jubilees* does not explicitly mention either of these traditions with regard to the birth of Moses. However, what should one think of the addition in *Jub.* 47:3ab: “They continued throwing the Hebrew sons into the river *for seven months, until the time when you were born*”? This seems to imply that there is a relationship, whatever it may be, between the commandment of Pharaoh to kill every male newborn, and the anticipation of the birth of Moses.<sup>59</sup> The rearrangement of the decree and the conception in *Jubilees* not only clears Amram and Jochebed of the accusation that they had intercourse in a time when the decree was already proclaimed, it also makes a connection between the decree and the birth of Moses. Possibly, according to the author of *Jubilees*, the decree was issued at the conception of Moses. In this case, too, “seven months” then implies that Moses was born too early.

#### ***Moses at the Riverside (Exodus 2:3-10 // Jubilees 47:3d-9)***

The story in Exod 2:3a about the end of Moses’ period of hiding merely reads: “When she could hide him no longer.” It gives no reason why she could hide him no longer. *Jub.* 47:3d has a variation on the biblical text and reports that after she hid the infant for three months, “they,” i.e., unidentified informers, told on her. It gives a reason why Moses’ mother could no longer hide him. The Egyptians were tracing her. In a certain way, it gives her an excuse. This variation matches another aggadic elaboration, e.g., that in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*: “It was no longer possible for her to hide him, because the Egyptians had noticed her” (*Tg. Ps.-J* Exod 2:3).<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>58</sup>Cf. Rosmarin, *Moses*, 45-46.

<sup>59</sup>Flavius Josephus mentions the fact that a priest reports to the king that in the near future a child will be born among the Israelites who will, when he has grown up, end the dominion of the Egyptians, and who will bring the Israelites to power (*Ant. Jud.* II:205). However, this started before the conception of Moses.

<sup>60</sup>So also in *b. Sotah* 12a; *Midrash Exodus Rabbah* 1:20; *Midrash Song of Songs Rabbah* 2:15.2. See also Ezekiel the Tragedian: “When she could no longer escape detection” (*Exagoge*, 15); cf. Philo, *Vit. Mos.* 1:9-10.



Exodus continues with the report that Moses' mother gets herself a box made of bulrushes, and covered it with asphalt and pitch. In *Jubilees*, the mother makes the box herself, and the material is not specified. The materials asphalt and pitch are reversed in *Jubilees*. In Exodus, the mother first puts the child in the box, and then leaves the box on the riverbank. In *Jubilees*, the mother first puts the box on the riverbank, and then puts the child in it. It indicates perhaps something of the special care and tenderness Moses receives, which we find also in the continuation of the text.

Exodus is not explicit about how long the basket stayed there before the daughter of Pharaoh found it, nor does it state what happened to the baby before it was found. The biblical text only reads that "his sister stood at a distance to know what would be done to him" (Exod 2:4). *Jubilees*, however, is more specific. In line with its stress on the number seven, it relates that Moses stayed in his basket for seven days. Moreover, his mother and his sister took special care of him. At night, his mother would come to nurse him, whereas during the day his sister kept an eye on him. Unlike the Biblical text, according to which Moses' sister stood some distance away (Exod 2:4), Miriam did not watch at a distance;<sup>61</sup> she protected him from the birds.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup>See also Ezekiel the Tragedian, *Exagoge* 18: "My sister Mariam stood guard nearby." See also Philo, *Vit. Mos.* 1:12.

<sup>62</sup>According to Halpern-Amaru (*Empowerment*, 123, note 52) the reference to the birds appears to be a subtle indicator of Mastema for it recalls the young Abram combating the work of Mastema in Chaldea (*Jub.* 11:11-13, 18-21). It is true that apart from the reference to the Prince of Mastema in Abraham's words to Jacob, he appears after the binding of Isaac only in the Exodus story. With regard to Abram, the Prince of Mastema sent crows and birds so that they might eat the seed which was being sown in the earth. In this way, he reduced the inhabitants of Babylon to poverty (*Jub.* 11:9-13). Then the birth of Abram is recounted, and the mention that his father taught him writing (*Jub.* 11:14-17). As a young boy, Abram protected the seed (*Jub.* 11:18-22). In the story about the binding of Isaac, Prince Mastema questioned the nature of Abraham's faithfulness, and suggested that he should be tested by offering his son (*Jub.* 17:16). With regard to Moses, his birth and education by his father are recounted (*Jub.* 47:1-9). However, it is his sister who protected Moses from the birds. Later on, the Prince of Mastema wanted to kill Moses and save the Egyptians (*Jub.* 48:3-4), and he empowered the magicians (*Jub.* 48:9).

The princess comes to the Nile to bathe. The narrative is slightly changed in *Jubilees* at this point. The biblical text mentions that the princess was accompanied by her maidens. When she saw the box, she sent her maid to bring the box. Only after she had opened the box does she see the child and hear him crying (cf. Exod 2:5-6c). In *Jubilees* it does not say that Pharaoh's daughter was accompanied by her maidens, although they are presupposed. Exodus uses four verbs before arriving at the crying of the child ("she saw," "she sent," "she opened," "she saw," and only then she heard the child crying). In *Jubilees*, it says immediately that she heard Moses crying (*Jub.* 47:5b). This is probably what arouses her compassion. Thereafter, she ordered her slaves to bring Moses to her, and they did so. Then she took Moses out of the box (*Jub.* 47:5-6).

When the princess saw the baby, she recognized him as a Hebrew child, in the biblical text (Exod 2:6f). The text does not explain how she knows this. This might be the reason for the omission of this identification in *Jubilees*.<sup>63</sup>

Furthermore, there is no direct conversation between Moses' mother and Pharaoh's daughter in *Jubilees*. The text simply says that the princess gave wages to Moses' mother, and that she took care of him (*Jub.* 47:8ab).

In Exodus, Moses is brought by his mother to the royal palace. It does not say in the biblical text how long his mother took care of him (Exod 2:9e-10b: "The woman took the child, she nursed him, the child grew, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter"). In *Jubilees*, it says twice that Moses was brought to Pharaoh's daughter, without the mother being mentioned in this respect. The first time an indefinite formulation is used: "Afterwards, when you had grown up, *you were brought* to the Pharaoh's daughter." Shortly after this, the father is named explicitly as the one who brought Moses to the court: "He (= your father Amram) brought you into the royal court" (*Jub.* 47:9e). Moreover, the text makes clear at what age Moses went to Pharaoh's daughter. He was 21 years old (*Jub.* 47:9d: "after you had completed three weeks"). This makes clear that, according to *Jubilees*, Moses got his earliest education not in the palace of

---

<sup>63</sup>In rabbinic literature, it is said that she saw that he was circumcised (*b. Sotah* 12a). According to others, an angel told her that Moses was a Hebrew son (*b. Sotah* 12b).

Pharaoh, but in his own house, by his own father (*Jub.* 47:9c: “your father Amram taught you the art of writing”). This resolves a problem that the biblical text does not answer, namely how does Moses become aware that he was one of the Israelites?<sup>64</sup> But there is something else. He could use his skill to write the book of *Jubilees*.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, the notion that Moses’ father Amram taught him the art of writing seems to be at odds with a tradition that reports on Moses’ education in Egyptian wisdom.<sup>66</sup> However, it is consistent in the book of *Jubilees*, and it puts Moses on one line with all the patriarchs.

The art of writing is an important issue in the book of *Jubilees*. Fathers teach their sons the art of writing (cf. *Jub.* 8:2; 11:16; 47:9; cf. 19:14). In addition, it was Enoch who was the first on earth to learn the art of writing, instruction, and wisdom (*Jub.* 4:17). Abraham learned to write from his father (*Jub.* 11:16), although it was the Angel of the Presence who taught him Hebrew (*Jub.* 12:25-27). When Jacob and his brother grew up “Jacob learned the art of writing, but Esau did not learn it” (*Jub.* 19:14).

The art of writing and reading is often connected with *halakhic* instruction of one type or another that is written down by the fathers in a book (*Jub.* 4:17; 7:38-39; 10:13-14; 10:17; 12:27; 21:10; 39:6-7; 45:16) and handed down to their sons. In this way, the author of *Jubilees* creates a chain of tradition which is quite distinctive: Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah, Shem, Abram, Isaac, Jacob, (Joseph), Levi. In *Jub.* 19:24, the chain of tradition is traced back to Adam: Adam, Seth, Enos, Malaleel, Enoch, Noah, Shem.<sup>67</sup> It is interesting to note that some links in the chain have been omitted. I would point to the generations between Shem and Abram

---

<sup>64</sup>Cf. Jacobson, *Exagoge*, p. 78. Ezekiel the Tragedian recounts that it was his mother who told Moses about his descent: “My mother brought me to the princess’ palace, after telling me all about my lineage and God’s gifts” (*Exagoge*, 33-35).

<sup>65</sup>VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees*, 118-120.

<sup>66</sup>E.g., Ezekiel the Tragedian, *Exagoge* 37; Philo, *Vit. Mos.* I:20-24; Acts 7:22. Cf. Berger, *Jubiläen*, 539.

<sup>67</sup>Cf. K. Müller, “Die hebräische Sprache der Halacha als Textur der Schöpfung. Beobachtungen zum Verhältnis von Tora und Halacha im Buch der Jubiläen,” in: H. Merklein, K. Müller, and G. Stemberger (eds.), *Bibel in jüdischer und christlicher Tradition* (BBB 38; Frankfurt: Hain 1993) 157-176 (161, note 6).

(Arpachsad, Kainan, Shelah, Eber, Peleg, Ragew, Serug, Nahor, Terah), which the author of *Jubilees* sees as being erratic, troubled generations.<sup>68</sup> This could be seen in conjunction with the fact that during these generations, the earth was divided (cf. *Jub.* 8:9-9:15; 10:27-36), the Tower of Babel was built (cf. *Jub.* 10:19-26), and evil spirits began to have an influence on Noah's grandchildren (*Jub.* 10:1-15). As a consequence of the collapse of the Tower, the knowledge of the Hebrew language was lost (*Jub.* 12:25; cf. *Jub.* 10:26). The antediluvian patriarchs Kenan and Jared are also omitted from the chain of tradition. This is possibly due to the fact that Kenan was associated with Cain, and Jared is associated with the Watchers, because in his days they came down to earth.

The *halakhic* instructions that are written in the books of the fathers are about several subjects. Enoch wrote down "the signs of the sky in accord with the fixed pattern of their months so that mankind would know the seasons of the years according to the fixed patterns of each of their months" (*Jub.* 4:17). He also taught the law of the first fruits (*Jub.* 7:38-39; cf. *Jub.* 7:35-37). Noah wrote down all the kinds of medicine which would prevent the evil spirits from pursuing Noah's children (*Jub.* 10:12-14). When he was in the house of Potiphar, Joseph remembered Abraham's words "that no one is to commit adultery with a woman who has a husband" (*Jub.* 39:6). The purpose of linking the *halakhic* instructions to the chain of tradition was obviously to anchor those instructions that are important for the author of *Jubilees* in the time of the Patriarchs.<sup>69</sup> In fact the *halakha* of *Jubilees* is immanent to the creation.<sup>70</sup> The *halakha* written in the books of the Patriarchs is on various occasions said to be derived

---

<sup>68</sup>Cf. Halpern-Amaru, *Empowerment*, 21.

<sup>69</sup>K. Berger, *Das Buch der Jubiläen* (JSHRZ 5.3; Gütersloh 1981) 279; S. Rosenkranz, "Vom Paradies zum Tempel," in: S. Lauer and H. Ernst (eds.), *Tempelkult und Tempelzerstörung (70 n. Chr.): Festschrift für Clemens Thoma zum 60. Geburtstag* (Judaica et Christiana 15; Bern: Lang 1995) 27-131 (esp. 36); B. Ego, "Heilige Zeit - heiliger Raum - heiliger Mensch. Beobachtungen zur Struktur der Gesetzesbegründung in der Schöpfungs- und Paradiesgeschichte des Jubiläenbuches," in: M. Albani, J. Frey, and A. Lange (eds.), *Studies in the Book of Jubilees* (TSAJ 65; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 1997) 207-219 (esp. 207).

<sup>70</sup>Cf. *Jub.* 12:25-27, where Hebrew is called "the language of the creation." Müller, "Hebräische Sprache," 165.

from the teachings of the angels. Enoch wrote down his testimony “as we [the angels] had told him” (*Jub.* 4:18). Noah wrote “everything (just) as we [the angels] had taught him” (*Jub.* 10:13; cf. *Jub.* 10:10) in a book. It was the Angel of the Presence who taught Abraham Hebrew in order to enable him to study the books of his fathers (*Jub.* 12:25-27). Joseph himself remembered that for committing adultery, heaven had ordained the death penalty (*Jub.* 39:6). This means that the *halakha* were ultimately anchored in the order of heaven.<sup>71</sup>

Moses is placed within the authoritative written tradition that began with Enoch before the flood and extended through the patriarchal period to Moses’ time. All patriarchs contributed to this written tradition and they transmitted it to their favourite sons. The full law would be recorded in Moses’ time.<sup>72</sup>

## 6. Final Remarks

The comparison between *Jub.* 47:1-9 and Exod 1:22-2:10 showed that the narrative structure runs more or less parallel in both versions. However, the structure of the marriage and birth report is not taken over. As far as the wording is concerned, the author of *Jubilees* sometimes reproduces the text of Exodus quite literally, but he also changes his model at other places. He omits certain phrases and passages, and he adds others, while he also modifies passages that run parallel. The author of *Jubilees* is a careful reader of the biblical text. This text poses some difficulties for him (e.g., blanks, inconsistencies). With his rewriting he tries to solve these problems. I point to the relocation of Exod 1:22, the omission of the marriage report, the naming of the characters, the stay of Amram in Canaan, and several of the variations in the report of the abandonment of Moses (Exod 2:3-10; cf. *Jub.* 47:3-9). Sometimes the alterations in the rewriting are in line with biblical data (e.g., the naming of the

---

<sup>71</sup>This is, in fact, in line with the mention of the ‘heavenly tablets’ in *Jubilees* at other places (*Jub.* 3:10; 4:5; 5:13-14; 6:31, 35; 16:3, 9; 19:9; 23:32; 24:33; 30:19-22; 31:32; 32:21-22). Several *halakhot* can be found on the heavenly tablets. For a study on the heavenly tablets see F. García Martínez, “The Heavenly Tablets in the Book of *Jubilees*,” in: M. Albani, J. Frey, and A. Lange (eds.), *Studies in the Book of Jubilees* (TSAJ 65; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 1997) 243-260.

<sup>72</sup>Cf. VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees*, 120.

characters). Sometimes it is clear that other sources are used (e.g., the *Aramaic Document of Levi*; *4QVisions*). However, sometimes his alterations are not in line with his sources, and in these cases the author of *Jubilees* is able to put his own bias in the text. I point to the chronological system, the omission of the marriage report, and Moses' education by his father.<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>73</sup>This contribution is a reworked and enlarged version of my "The Birth of Moses in Egypt according to the Book of Jubilees (Jub 47.1-9)," in: G.H. van Kooten and A. Hilhorst (eds.), *The Wisdom of Egypt. Jewish, Early Christian, and Gnostic Essays in Honour of Gerard P. Luttikhuisen* (AJEC 59; Leiden: Brill 2005) 43-66.